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ABSTRACT

This training module presents a social skills curriculum designed to be utilized as a tool for parents and teachers to increase levels of interaction between preschool children with and without autism. The curriculum consists of five social skills that were chosen based on evidence suggesting that they tend to result in more lengthy interactions between children and create the potential for friendships. These skills include: getting your friend's attention, sharing, sharing requests, play organizing, and compliments. The module includes the following materials: (1) a social interaction procedural checklist; (2) a checklist for deciding who needs social skills training; (3) teacher ideas for promoting interactions; (4) play activities for promoting social interactions; (5) scripts for teacher and parent use in teaching the social skills curriculum; (6) instructions for creating posters for social skills instruction and ways to incorporate social interactions into a daily routine; (7) strategies for using a buddy system; (8) ways to use snack time to promote social interactions; (9) friendship activities; and (10) strategies for collecting data on social skills. (Contains 28 references.) (CR)

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SOCIAL SKILLS
CLASSROOM TRAINING PACKET

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Providing training & technical assistance to meet the educational needs of young children with autism since 1981.

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THE LEAP OUTREACH PROJECT

Information on Social Skills Programming

Main Ideas

- Importance and Need for Social Skills
- Assessing the Environment
- Identifying Students Needing Social Skills
- Teacher Ideas for Promoting Interactions
- Play Activities for Promoting Social Interactions
- Prompting & Reinforcing Interactions
- The Social Skills Curriculum
- Incorporating Interactions into the Daily Routine
- Collecting Data on Social Skills

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✏Importance and Need for Social Skills

The social skill deficits of young children with autism are well established (Strain, 1990). In fact, one of the defining characteristics of the diagnosis are the atypical ways these children interact with peers, family members, and others with whom they come into contact. Studies show that there is a relationship between peer status in childhood and later dysfunction in adolescence and adulthood and that unpopular children are "at risk" for later adjustment problems (Cowen, Pederson, Babigian, Izzo, & Trost, 1973; Roff, Sells, & Golden, 1972; Ullmann, 1957; Parker & Asher, 1985; Kupersmidt, 1983).

Promoting the social development of youngsters with autism is one of the primary goals of preschool integration, as is facilitating the ability of young children with social delays to develop appropriate friendships. While a significant amount of preschool integration research has concluded that young children with social delays engage in social interactions more frequently in integrated programs than in non-integrated programs, mere placement does not automatically result in increased social acceptance or the modeling of desired peer behavior (Guralnick, 1990; Guralnick & Groom, 1988; Peck & Cooke, 1983; Schultz & Turnbull, 1983; Striefel, Killoran, & Quintero, 1991; Gresham, 1982).

With early and intensive intervention the seemingly pervasive social skill deficits of many children with autism can be remediated (Lovaas, 1987; McGee, 1993; Strain, 1987). If there is such a thing as a "recipe for success" it must include *regular* access to typical peers, thoughtful planning of social situations and the use of "social" toys, multiple-setting opportunities to practice emerging social skills, and intensive data collection in order to make midcourse corrections to existing intervention plans (Strain & Danko, 1994).

The LEAP Preschool has a social skills curriculum that has been developed over the past 18 years and has been extensively researched. It continues to be utilized as a tool for parents and teachers in increasing levels of interaction between children. This is especially important for students within integrated classrooms since some children with disabilities can exhibit decreased levels of social interaction (Strain, Kohler, Storey, & Danko, 1994). The current curriculum consists of five social skills that were chosen based on evidence suggesting that they tend to result in more lengthy interactions between children and create the potential for friendships (Kohler, F.W., Strain, P.S., & Shearer, D.D., 1992).

To help demonstrate the usefulness of this social skills package, LEAP conducted numerous studies. In these areas of inquiry LEAP has shown that:

- Typically developing peers as young as 36 months can be taught easily to utilize facilitative social and communicative initiations with their peers with autism (Goldstein & Wickstrom, 1986; Strain & Danko, 1995).

- ☞ Peers' use of facilitative strategies result in higher rates of communicative interaction for preschoolers with autism (Goldstein et al, 1988; Strain, 1987; Kohler & Strain, in press).
- ☞ The peer facilitative strategies often produce "day one" effects, suggesting that the delayed social and communicative abilities of many young children with autism may be attributable, in part, to the socially non-responsive settings in which they are most often educated (Strain & Odom, 1986; Kohler & Strain, 1993).
- ☞ For many children who receive the peer-mediated intervention, their eventual level of social participation falls within the typical range for their age cohorts (Strain, 1987).

✏Assessing the Environment

The classroom environment plays a critical role in the number of opportunities for regular social interactions among children. There are basically five steps staff should follow to ensure social interactions are occurring in the classroom. First, teachers must *plan for how they will encourage social interactions during curriculum planning meetings*. Secondly, teachers need to *make time to teach social skills* (either during structured group times or in small groups). Third, staff need to *arrange the environment to promote social interactions*. Fourth, adults need to *regularly prompt interactions between children*. Finally, staff should *have a plan in place for reinforcing child to child interactions* to ensure their continued occurrence. The following checklist assists adults in assessing the children's environment. The more questions for which you can answer "yes", the more opportunities there are for social interactions in your classroom.

SOCIAL INTERACTION PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST

- ✔ Are there typically developing children available for daily interaction?
- ✔ Are all class activities structured to promote social interactions?
- ✔ Are typically developing children offered specific instruction to foster interaction with peers?
- ✔ Are interactions mostly child-directed, not teacher-directed, during free play?
- ✔ Are social skills goals included in children's IEP's?
- ✔ Do teachers provide children with positive feedback when they are playing nicely together?
- ✔ Does the teacher help by supporting and suggesting play ideas?

✏ Identifying Students Needing Social Skills

WHO NEEDS SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING?
TEACHERS IDENTIFY CANDIDATES

Date: _____ Child: _____ Rater: _____

1. Given an occasion in which the child has play materials and another child does not, the child will:
   a. verbally or nonverbally tell other children not to take his materials
   b. not spontaneously offer to share materials
   c. share materials on rare occasions (1% to 25% of occasions)
   d. share materials occasionally (25% to 50% of occasions)
   e. share materials frequently (50% to 100% of occasions)

2. When a peer offers to share a play material, the child will:
   a. say no; push materials away; lash out
   b. ignore the share offer
   c. rarely take the material (1% to 25% of occasions)
   d. occasionally take the material (25% to 50% of occasions)
   e. frequently take the material (50% to 100% of occasions)

3. During a play activity, the child will:
   a. tell other children he/she does not want to play with them
   b. ignore other children
   c. rarely suggest a play idea or role for another child (1% to 25% of occasions)
   d. occasionally suggest a play idea or role for another child (25% to 50% of occasions)
   e. frequently suggest a play idea or role for another child (50% to 100% of occasions)

4. When another child suggests a play idea or role, the child will:
   a. say "no" or otherwise respond in a negative fashion
   b. ignore the other child's play suggestion
   c. rarely comply with the play suggestion or role (1% to 25% of occasions)
   d. occasionally comply with the play suggestion or role (25% to 50% of occasions)
   e. Frequently comply with the play suggestion or role 25% to 50% of occasions)

KEY: If you answered more than 3 questions with a b or worse (a's are worse) means the child *needs intervention*

✏Teacher Ideas for Promoting Interactions

School plays a critical role in each child's social development and self-concept. Consider the fact that students spend a significant part of their daily lives at school within the classroom. According to Lavoie, children tend to fall into specific social "categories" in the school setting such as: 1) *popular*: students who have established positive relationships within a variety of groups; 2) *controversial*: students who have established a circle of friends based upon common interests or proximity but seldom move beyond that circle; 3) *isolated*: students who, although not openly rejected, are ignored by classmates and are uninvolved in the social aspects of school; and 4) *rejected*: students who are consistently subjected to ridicule, bullying and harassment by classmates. This classification system applies to all students, even though at the preschool level, perhaps students have not yet been pigeonholed or their classification has not yet become apparent.

Lavoie believes there is much that the teacher can do to foster and promote the social development of each student in her classroom and increase a child's acceptance regardless of their age:

> **Working with Preschoolers**: Educators are in a good position to foster the acceptance of socially incompetent students by demonstrating support and caring despite the child's behavioral or language weaknesses. Focus on promoting age-appropriate language and communication skills for the child in a positive, supportive, and accepting manner.

Working with Elementary School Students: Educators at this level can try *assigning the troubled child to work in pairs* with a high-status child who will be accepting and supportive. The teacher must also *search for opportunities to promote and encourage appropriate social interactions*, like having the socially troubled child communicate messages to another student for you. Avoid the humiliating feelings of the "last one picked" scenario by *preselecting teams or drawing names from a hat* instead of letting students hand-pick classmates from the large group. *Playing classroom games* can foster social development (voice modulation, taking turns, sportsmanship, competition, etc.) and promote academic skills.

With children of any age, teachers should determine the specific interests, hobbies, or strengths of the rejected child. Once discovered, these should be celebrated in a very public manner. Rejected children playing the expert role can greatly increase their status. Also, try assigning the isolated child to a position of leadership in which his classmates become dependent on him. Finally, recognize the parents' and siblings' role in the child's social development by involving the family. Ensure that social goals are on the IEP and are being addressed as well as prioritized. Following are more ideas and strategies for teachers to utilize in increasing social interactions in the classroom.

ENCOURAGING SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

STRUCTURE ACTIVITIES TO *ENCOURAGE & TEACH*:

- Sharing
- Turn-Taking
- Requesting and distributing items
- Working cooperatively

USE MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES THAT ARE:

- Of high interest
- Novel to the children
- Of high social value

ENCOURAGE ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOR BY TEACHING CHILDREN:

- To talk politely
- Use positive words
- To help each other
- To express emotion

TEACH BASIC RULES ABOUT FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIPS LIKE:

- Friends are kind to each other
- Friends share with each other
- Friends help and support each other

Set-up/arrange materials. Setting up or arranging materials in advance or during the activity that are novel or unique to the area is a good way to facilitate a reaction. Materials that are not typical for the activity or arranged in advance may he spontaneously brought into the area once the interest and nature of the child's play becomes more evident. Materials that are planned in advance of the activity may not always fit the child's interest during the activity.
Examples: The teacher places a box of large cardboard blocks in the gross motor area for the children to stack at the bottom of the slide. Children enjoy sliding down the slide and knocking over the blocks.

The teacher places letter cards on the side of a climber in the gross motor area. Alex (the focal child) directs the teacher to crawl her toy dinosaur up the cards by naming the letter on the next card he wants the dinosaur to crawl on.

The teacher encourages Alex and two other children to bring cars over to the slide for races. She directs the children to hold the cars up at the top and wait for Alex to say, "Ready, set, go!"

Join the activity to enrich the quality of the child's play ans/or participation. Assume an activity related role in play with the child. This involves more than actively commenting on what the child is or may be doing during the activity.
Examples: After reading a book about cowboys, the teacher assumes the role of a bad guy, steals some food from the table where Mike is playing (socio-dramatic area), then encourages Mike to be the Sheriff and capture her.

The teacher takes on the role of a small creature she is manipulating. The creature she is holding keeps trying to get the lid off a container which holds more creatures that Alex wants. She seeks directions from Alex during the play and encourages him to chant, "pull, pull" as the creature attempts to lift the lid.

The teacher actively participates in a game of basketball with Alex and his peers. She occasionally steals the ball and runs with it, she holds the ball beyond the children's reach, and redirects the ball back to Alex's hands as needed.

Require expansion in response to the child's initiation by asking follow-up questions or by intentionally delaying a response to the child in an effort to make the child repeat or elaborate on his verbalization.
Examples: Once Alex has made a basic request for a toy, the teacher withholds the toy and asks a series of questions to gain more information and as extended interaction. "You want the car. What color is it?" "Is it a big or little car?" "Where are you going to take it?"

The teacher acts like she does not hear Mike's request to stack the blocks; she holds the block, turning it over and over while looking across the room. Mike repeats the request with more specific details about where and how to stack it. The teacher responds to these repeated overtures by complying with the child's requests.

Encourage activity-related talk by modeling of or inviting participation songs/nursery rhymes, chanting, reading, counting, or appropriate reciting.
Examples: The teacher slowly sings "Three Little Monkeys" and plays the part of the alligator, while the children work to keep the monkeys away from her.

The teacher models then encourages Mike to say, "Ready, set, go" as other children get ready to slide into the blocks at the bottom of the climber.

The teacher invites Mike to say "1, 2, 3, go" as the other children prepare to race their cars down the slide.

The teacher models lines from a Winnie the Pooh book that Mike knows well to encourage him to interact with peers.

The teacher directs Alex to count blocks as they are being stacked at the bottom of the slide.

Invite the child to direct teacher behaviors. While playing with the child and situations occur in which the child can direct the play scenario, the teacher can ask the child questions related to her role in their play together. Caution should be taken to have such question flow naturally during play. The child should not be inundated with questions related to the teacher's role in the activity. The questions are most natural when both teacher and child are working together to solve a problem during play.
Examples: In a previous example, once the teacher had established the fact that the creatures were stuck in a place out of Alex's reach and would need help getting out, she asked Alex to tell her what to do. He responded by telling her to pull hard or lift him up so he could try. He took on a very active role in directing her behaviors to get his creatures.

The teacher could also intentionally stack the blocks incorrectly, violating Alex's expectations. He would immediately react and she could ask him to tell her how to correctly stack them.

Encourage focal child and peer interactions by inviting children to attend to each other and play together. The teacher wants the children to join in an activity together, without prompting for verbal or non-verbal interaction.
Examples: The teacher sets up an activity where Like pretends to be Tigger. The teacher then asks two peers if they would like to be Winnie the Pooh and Piglet.

The teacher notices a peer building a road in the block area. She tells the child to look at Alex and ask if he would like to help.

Invite children to exchange materials
Examples: After winning the basketball game, the teacher suggests that the team members give each other a high five.

The teacher encourages children to include Mike in their plans and be sure to ask him for his ideas.

The teacher asks Mike to pick which peer would be next to knock over the stack of blocks and then prompts Mike to say, "ready, set, go!" at the right time.

Invite children to talk or engage in nonverbal interactions by prompting either the focal child or peers.
Examples: After winning the basketball game, the teacher suggests that the team members give each other a high five.

The teacher encourages children to include Mike in their plans and be sure to ask him for his ideas.

The teacher asks Mike to pick which peer would be next to knock over the stack of blocks and then prompts Mike to say, "ready, set, go!" at the right time.

✏Play Activities for Promoting Social Interactions

The toys and activities you make available in the classroom can help promote social interactions. If you insist that materials are shared or provide toys that require two children in order for it to operate, there will be more opportunities for children to play together. Important skills such as sharing and taking turns will then occur more naturally. Follow these suggested ideas for promoting interaction between children in the classroom.

Art Activities:

Materials:

Tempura Paint	Colored Pencils
Water Colors	Chalk
Finger Paints	Stamps (ink and sponges for paint)
Markers	Assortment of Paper (colors and sizes)
Mural Paper	

Promoting Interactions:

☼Giving two children one piece of paper to paint, color, glue, etc...

✎Place markers, crayons, pencils, in separate bins, children pass the bins to obtain a colored markers

☺Children share the same water cup for rinsing paint brushes

✂For gluing activities, one child can spread the glue on the paper while the other child chooses the picture/paper.

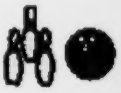
Motor Activities:

Tunnels	Roll-a-round	Boxes, Blankets
Riding toys for two	Wagons, Airplane	Telephones
Climber and Slide	Rocking Boat	Basketball and Hoop
Trampoline	Jump-a-roo	Bowling Pins
Beanbags and Targets	Parachute	Balls

Promote Interactions By:

When opportunities arise, purchase riding toys that promote interactions. For example, buy wagons (one child pulls another around), and riding toys that have seats large enough for two. You can purchase children's bikes that have back seats.

For games such as bowling, set up the activity for the children to take turns at rolling the ball then setting up the pins for the next child. For games that require throwing into something (e.g., a hoop or basket), one child can hold the hoop while the other throws the ball.



For jumping activities such as trampoline and jump-a-roo, two children can hold hands while jumping.

For the slide, ask children to catch or tickle a child sliding down. Have one child say, "Ready, Set, Go!" for another child sliding.

Make sure lesson plans include interactive games such as hot potato, ring-around-the-rosey, duck-duck-goose, the farmer in the dell, and motor boat, etc... Where children must hold hands or work together to play the game.

Sensory Activities:

A sensory table can be filled with a variety of materials. For example, try the following materials: Wet or Dry Sand, Oatmeal, Birdseed, Cornmeal, Rice, Beans, Macaroni, Water, or Shaving Cream.

Materials:
Bowls, spoons, pitchers, plastic food, pans
Rakes, shovels, dump trucks, small blocks, cars, plastic people
Small items hidden in the table (shells, stones, items that can be matched to a poster of outlined items
Boats, straws, squirt/spray bottles
Plastic fish and nets
Plastic animals with cars or plastic train set
Scissors hanging by string taped to the sides of the table; scrap paper in the table, and mural paper with glue or contact paper tacked to the wall, sticky side out.

Promote Interactions By:

Changing the materials in the sensory table often. New materials will attract children to the activity, providing more opportunities for social interactions.

Add materials which promote sharing such as one large bowl with 2 spoons.

Prompt interactions by suggesting one child holds a bottle while the other child fills it.

Children can take turns burying each other's hands.

Two children can blow through straws to make a boat move.

When a child needs a play item, remind the child to ask a friend to pass it to him instead of reaching for it himself.

Dramatic Play:

Materials:

Taking care of babies (feeding, walking, dressing)	Picnic	Cooking
Grocery Store	Birthday Party	Farm
Train	Fishing	Bus
	Airplane	

Large Doll House	Gardening	Pet Store
Dress-up	Puppets	Play School
Large Cars/Gas Pumps	Hamburger Stand	Post Office
Tunnels	Shoe Store	Washing/Ironing
Beauty Parlor/Barber Shop	House Cleaning	Road Maps/Car
Doctor's Office (using dolls or children as patients)		Fireman

Promote Interactions By:

Set up free play activities in advance. For novel themes, you may need to review play sequences in advance. In addition, children who need exposure to new socio-dramatic activities can be paired with children who are familiar with the activity.

Introduce simple, single themes and give children time to develop the themes

Initially suggest roles to the children and help children learn the roles

Add novel and "real life" materials to the play area

Read a favorite story such as Winnie the Pooh, assign or allow kids to choose a character to be. Act out the story. For example: Pooh and friends having a picnic.

Suggested socio-dramatic play procedures: ex., Birthday Party
Materials: Paper cups, paper plates, plastic forks and spoons, play doh (for cake), pegs (for candles), wrapping paper and boxes (for presents), bowls and food usually found in the kitchen area.

Procedure: In the introduction, remind children they could make a birthday cake, wrap presents, set the table then sing "Happy Birthday" and cut the cake. The children should decide who will be the pretend birthday child. Tell children to find a partner to play with. Two children can make the cake while two children wrap presents, for example.

Manipulative Activities:

Materials:

Small Blocks	Wonder Blocks	Foam Puzzles
Doll House and Furniture	Large Plastic Blocks	Mr. Potato Head
Puzzles	Nesting Cups	Garage and Cars
Parquetry	Tinker Toys	Lego's
Farm and Animals	Pegs	Shape Boxes

Promote Interactions By:

Present materials in different kinds of containers, then give each child one of the containers. Remind children to ask each other for the container they want. For example, one child could have the purple and blue parquetry blocks, the other child could have green and red.

If playing with puzzles one puzzle could be shared between two children.

One child hands pegs to another child, who then places the pegs in the holder.

A child holds a tower of blocks for another child who is adding to the tower.

Children make a bridge with blocks and push a car under the bridge to each other.

MORE IDEAS FOR PLAY ACTIVITIES

Categories

1. Creative Product Activities
2. Large Muscle Activities
3. Dramatic Activities
4. Sensory Activities
5. Manipulation Activities

Each category is divided into:

A. Activities
B. Manner in which activities are usually used
C. Manner used to promote interaction

1. **CREATIVE PRODUCT ACTIVITIES:**

A. Activities
Crayons/paper
Carbon paper/pencil/paper
Water Colors/paper/brushes
with water books/brushes/water
Finger painting
Paste/paper/pieces of paper
Mural drawing/water colors or tempera
Mural drawing/markers/crayons
Chalk on paper
Chalk on board
Water on board
Stamp art: ink stamps, Temora

B. Manner in which activities are usually used:
Each child is usually given a drawing or painting utensil and a paper or color page, or they are directed to paint or draw on mural paper or chalkboard. Each child usually colors or paints independently.

C. Manner used to promote interaction
Each pair is given one piece of paper or one color page. Two children work on one paper. All brushes, markers, crayons, or

pencils are placed in a bin. Children pass the bin to obtain a color.
Suggested Interactions:

- Children ask their friends to pass more markers or crayons to them.
- When finger painting, two children can work on one paper.
- When pasting, one child can spread paste and another child can paste on the item.
- When painting, all children share the same water tub.

2. **LARGE MUSCLE ACTIVITIES:**

A. Activities
Tunnels
Riding toys
Large ladder and slide
Small slide and pillows
Trampoline, bean bags, pillows
Boxes, rugs, phones, pillows
Wagons
Beanbags, balls, baskets
Empty block box (riding)
Bowling
Nerf basketball
Toss Across

B. Manner in which activities are usually used:
Each child, one at a time, takes a turn using the toys; for example, going through the tunnel, climbing the ladder and sliding down the slide, jumping on the trampoline, and then into the pillows or bean bag.

The activities that involve playing with a ball are also usually done one child at a time taking a turn to throw the ball or beanbag into a basket or basketball hoop, at pins, or on a toss across board.

C. Manner used to promote interaction:
Suggested Interactions:

- Materials should be positioned so the children must take turns. There should be enough toys to promote sharing (e.g. two children - one riding toy; three children - bowling pins, two balls). With the

slide, trampoline, tunnels; one child could be directed to jump, or slide down, or crawl through; and another child could be catching, or verbally encouraging that child to come. Two children could play inside the tunnel.

Suggested Interactions:

- On the riding toys, one child could ride the toy and another child could push it. Two children could be in or on the toy and another child could push it.
- When throwing balls or bean bags into a basket, one child could hold the basket for the other children to throw it.
- With boxes, rugs, phones, pillows; two children could be in a box; one or two children could be in on the other box. They could talk to each other on the telephone.

3. **DRAMATIC ACTIVITIES:**

A. Activities

Babies: washing, feeding, walking
Grocery store
Picnic
Large doll house
Dress-up
Large Cars: gas station
Large Cars: tunnel
Beauty shop/Barber shop
Washing dishes
Housecleaning
Doctor with dolls as patients
Doctor with friends as patients
Cooking
Birthday party
Setting table
Boat (fishing)
Gardening
Puppets
Hamburger stand
Shoe Store
Laundromat
Small road and cars
Fireman
Restaurant
Farmer

FISHER PRICE TOYS:
Doll house
Train
Farm
Bus
Airplane
Play School
Mailman/post office

Construction worker
Zoo Keeper
Fashion Show
Circus
Magic Show
Painters
Vacations (packing, using train, using bus, etc.)
School
Story plots: 3 Bears, Goldilocks, Going on a Bear Hunt
Airport
Astronaut
Library
Office
Clothing store
Camping
Vet
Pet Store
Carpenter

B. Manner in which activities are usually used:
With activities such as these, the materials are usually available in play areas. Children can play with them if they wish.

C. Manner used to promote interaction:
The materials for an activity are arranged. A small group of children are directed to play in the area. The teacher explains manner in which each of the materials is used.

Suggested Interaction:
For example: Birthday Party
Materials: Paper cups, paper plates, plastic forks and spoons, napkins, play doh, pegs, party hat and horns. Four of each of the materials (except play doh pegs) are placed in bins or containers. Each of these materials can be passed by the teacher. Pegs can be put in a container and passed.

Procedure: Four children will sit at a table. The teacher will explain that they will play birthday party. He/she will show them all of the materials, and explain that we will pass plates, cups, forks, spoons, napkins. Then everyone will be given play doh to make a cake, and pegs will be passed for candles. Then hats

and horns will be passed. Everyone will sing Happy Birthday, blow out candles, pretend to eat their cake. Then each of the materials will be placed into a bin by passing container to one another. The teacher may remain near the activity. He/she may reinforce children for playing together, or prompt children to play in the manner he/she explained.

4. **SENSORY ACTIVITIES:**

A water/sand table can be filled with a variety of materials.

A. Activities	Materials used with these activities
1. Sand (wet-dry)	1. Bowls, spoons, pitchers
2. Oatmeal	2. Rakes, shovels, dump trucks
3. Birdseed	3. Small items hidden in the table
4. Cornmeal	4. Boats, straws, squirt guns
5. Rice	5. Fish and nets (water)
6. Beans	
7. Macaroni	
8. Water	
9. Shaving cream	

B. Manner in which activities are usually used:
One table with one kind of materials is usually placed in an area of the classroom. The materials in the table usually remain the same for long periods of time. During free time for free play time, children play in the table, one at a time or with more children.

C. Manner of use to promote interaction:
These activities are scheduled only at specific times when the teacher can suggest interactions to the group. Only using these activities at specific times limits the potential of children becoming tired with the activities. The materials can be presented so that they can be shared (e.g. one bowl and two spoons or two shovels and one dump truck or many fish and two nets). The teacher should demonstrate how to use the materials; modeling the interactions.
Suggested Interactions:

- One child hold bowl while the other child fills it
- One child bury another child's hand
- Two children blow through straws to make one boat move

- Passing items from one child to another

5. **Manipulation Activities**

A. Activities

Small blocks	Wonder blocks
Large plastic blocks	Foam puzzles
Puzzles	Nesting cups
Parquetry	Tinker cups
Shape, boxes	Rig-a-mags
Lego's	Pegs

B. Manner in which activities are usually used:
Each child is usually given the manipulative activity to play with a friend or alone. There are usually no directions about how to play with the toys. At times, children could be given a puzzle or shape box to play with independently.

C. Manner used to promote interaction:
If given blocks, parquetry, shape box, etc., one child would be given all of the blocks. He or she would hand them one at a time to his or her friend. If playing with puzzles, one puzzle could be shared between two children. One child would hand puzzle pieces to a friend and tell where they belong.
Suggested Interactions:

- One child hands parquetry pieces to another and points to where they belong on the board
- One child hands pegs to another. One pegboard and one bin of legos
- One puzzle - one child hands pieces to the other child

✏Prompting and Reinforcing Social Interactions

Specific ways that you can promote social interactions at play time:

Place children in positions where they can interact

If you have four children, place two children together so they can play with each other. If you only have three, try to give two children turns to be together.

Be sure children look at each other and use names

Many times a child will be talking to another child but that child will not know because he is not in view or did not hear his name. You can say, "Who are you talking to?...Say his name." "Are you looking at your friend, he can't hear you."

Remind children to try again if they do not get a response

Many times a child will not respond to another child's initiations. Tell the child to try again a few more times by saying something again or tapping a child on the shoulder for attention. If a child still does not respond, you may want to help a little if possible and always be sure to reinforce the child for trying.

Remind children to "play with your friends"

This simple reminder may be all that is needed at times to promote interactions.

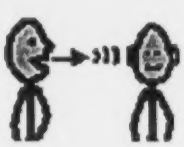
Tell children exactly what to say in simple sentences

Many times children need help in coming up with an interaction statement. You may have to specifically tell them what to say to their friend:

Say, "Give it to me Sally."

Say, "Put it here John."

Say, "Come over here Joey."



Arrange materials

Sometimes you can create lengthy interactions by using the techniques listed and arranging materials in a specific way.

For example:

If children are doing puzzles, you can place two children near each other and tell them to help each other put a puzzle together. Give all the pieces to one child and tell him/her to hand them one at a time to the other child to put in. To John you might say:

"Give a piece to Joe."
"Say, here John."
"Put it right in his hand."
"Did he do it?"
"Give him five."

Reinforce interactions

If you see children interacting, wait until the interaction is over then make reinforcing statements such as:

"You are such a good friend helping Cindy like that."
"I like the way you are all playing together."
"What good friends you are."
"Did you make that together?"

When children hear such statements they will interact more

BE CAREFUL AND REMEMBER

Don't make children interact all the time. If you see a natural opportunity then prompt it. Try for approximately five interactions to occur per activity - not the entire time.

Children sometimes give more physical help to another child than is necessary. You Should remind them to ask or talk to their friends first.

Don't interrupt an interaction. If you want to reinforce children for playing together wait until the interaction has stopped.

Stand back when you can and let children play. If you are right in with the children all of the time they tend to interact with you rather than with each other.

✏Peer Mediated Strategies: The Social Skills Curriculum

The following scripts are for teacher and parent use in teaching the social skills curriculum. The purpose of these scripts is to establish the proper steps in the instruction process as well as to give adults potential things to say to their audience about each skill. A great opportunity for teaching the skills is utilizing two or three minutes during a structured group time (e.g., circle time). Teach one skill a day until the steps involved in that skill are well understood by the children. Always review all skills previously learned before moving on to new skills. The posters accompanying each skill provide a visual reminder of the steps required to complete each skill. These posters can be hung in toy/play areas of the classroom or home where there are opportunities to interact.

Skill 1
GETTING YOUR FRIENDS ATTENTION

PREPARATION:

Set up one of the activities listed on pages 5-15 in this section.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PEERS

"Today we are going to learn about getting our friends to play with us. It is very important that children learn to play with each other. One way to get your friend to play with you is by getting their attention."

Step 1 Describe:

"One way you can get your friend to play with you is by getting their attention. When you get your friends attention:"

1. Look at your friend.

2. Say your friend's name.

3. Gently touch your friend on the shoulder or arm if they aren't looking at you

4. Keep trying.

"Here is a poster that shows a boy getting his friends attention. He is looking at her and touching her shoulder in the top one. In the bottom one he is looking at her and saying her name."

Step 2 Demonstrate

-"Let's practice getting a friend to look at you."

-"Now watch me. I'm going to get _____'s attention. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate)

-"Did I get _____'s attention?"

-"That's right I looked at my friend, said his/her name, and touched him/her gently on the arm."

-Repeat several times. Make sure each child has several opportunities to respond.

Step 3 Child Practice with Adult

"Now I want you to practice getting your friends attention. Let's pretend I'm your friend and you're going to get my attention."

"Remember to:
1) Look at me,
2) Say my name,
3) Gently touch me on the arm or shoulder if I'm not looking at you,
4) Keep trying."

Use the reminder, "Remember to get your friends attention" each time you have the child take a turn. This will help them remember what to do when they hear you say this during a play session.

"If you forget to get your friend's attention, I'll remind you by pointing to the poster."

Step 4 Practice with the Target Child

"Now we're going to have _____ come over and join us and I'm going to ask you to practice getting his/her attention. I'll help you by saying 'Remember to get your friends attention.' Remember your going to:

1) look at me
2) say may name
3) gently touch me on the arm or shoulder if I'm not looking at you
4) keep trying

I want the two of you (the two peers) to take turns getting _____'s attention.

Step 5 Awards and Prizes to Students

Give specific praise as to why students are getting prizes (such as, "You got your friend to look at you" for peers or, "You looked at your friends!" for target students).

Skill 2
SHARING or "Asking For and Giving Toys"

PREPARATION:

Set up one of the activities listed on pages 5-15 in this section.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PEERS

"Today you are going to learn how to be a good teacher. Sometimes your friends in class do not know how to play with other children. You are going to learn how to teach them to play."

Step 1 Describe

"One way you can get your friend to play with you is to share.
When you share:

1. Get your friends attention
2. Look at your friend
3. Say, 'here_____.'
4. Put a toy in their hand."

"Here is a poster that shows a boy sharing with his friend."

Step 2 Demonstrate

-"Let's practice sharing with a friend."

-"Now watch me. I'm going to share with __ _____. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate)

-"Did I share with _____?"

-"What did I do?"

-"That's right. I got _____'s attention. I looked at _____. I said here _____. And I put the toy in his/her hand."

-Repeat this procedure using different examples of sharing (for example, share the trucks, shovels, blocks, dolls etc.).

-Make sure each child has several opportunities to answer.

Step 3 Child Practice with Adult

"Now I want you to practice sharing. Let's pretend I'm your friend and you're going to share something with me. Remember to:

1) Get my attention
2) Look at me
3) Say here _____
4) Put the toy in my hand."

Use the reminder, "Remember to share with your friend" each time you have the children take a turn. This will help them remember what to do when they hear you say this during a play session.

- "If you forget ways to share I'll remind you by pointing to the poster."

Step 4 Practice with the Target Child

"Now we're going to have _____ come over and join us and I'm going to ask you to practice sharing with him/her. I'll help you remember to share by saying 'remember to share with your friend.' Remember you are going to:

1) Get _____'s attention
2) Look at _____
3) Say here _____
4) Put the toy in their hand."

"I want the two of you to (the two peers) to take turns sharing with _____."

Step 5 Award Prizes to Students

Give specific praise as to why students are getting prizes (e.g., "You shared with your friend" for peers or "You played with your friends" for target students).

Skill 3
SHARING REQUEST

PREPARATION
Set up one of the activities listed on pages 5-15 in this section.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PEERS

"Today you are going to learn more about how to be a good teacher. Sometimes your friends in class do not know how to play with other children. You are going to learn another way to play."

Step 1 Review Getting Your Friends Attention and Shares

Step 2 Describe

"Another way you can get your friend to play with you is you can ask them to give you a toy. When you ask for a toy you:

1) Get your friends attention.
2) Hold out your hand.
3) Say, "_____ would you give me the _____?"

"Your friend may not want to give you the toy they are playing with, so you should ask for an extra toy they have."

Step 3 Demonstrate the Right Way

-"Let's practice asking your friend for a toy."

-"Now watch me. I'm going to ask _____ for a toy. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate the right way)

-"Did I ask for the toy?"

-"What did I do?"

-"That's right, I got _____'s attention. I put out my hand. I said _____, would you please give me _____?"

-Repeat this procedure using different examples of asking for toys (for example, ask for the trucks, shovels, blocks, dolls, etc.).

-Make sure each child has several opportunities to answer.

Step 4 Demonstrate the Wrong Way

-"Let's practice asking your friend for a toy."

"Now watch me. I'm going to ask _____ for a toy. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate the Wrong Way).

"Did I ask _____ for a toy?"

"What did I do wrong?"

"That's right, I forgot to _____."

-Repeat this procedure using different examples of asking for toys (for example, ask for the trucks, shovels, blocks, dolls, etc.).

-Make sure each child has several opportunities to answer.

Step 5 Child Practice with Adult

"Now I want you to practice asking for a toy. Let's pretend I'm your friend and you're going to ask me to share something with you. Remember to:

1) Get my attention.
2) Hold out your hand.
3) Say, "_____, would you give me the _____?"

Use the reminder, " Remember to ask your friend to share" each time you have the children take a turn. This will help them remember what to do when they hear you say this during a play session. "If you forget ways to share I'll remind you by pointing to the poster."

Step 6 Practice with Target Child

"Now we're going to have _____ come over and join us and I'm going to ask you to practice sharing with him/her. I'll help you remember to share by saying 'remember to share with your friend.' Remember you are going to:

1) Get _____'s attention.
2) Hold out your hand.
3) Say, "_____, would you give the _____?"

"I want the two of you (the two peers) to take turns sharing with _____."

Step 7 Award Prizes to Students

Skill 4
PLAY ORGANIZER

PREPARATION

Set up one of the following activities: sand, water, housekeeping, or dress-up

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PEERS

"Today you are going to learn more about how to be a good teacher. Sometimes your friends in class do not know how to play with other children. You are going to learn another way to teach them to play."

Step 1 Review Getting your Friends Attention, Shares, and Share Requests

Step 2 Describe

"Today I am going to show you another way you can get your friend to play with you. You can give him/her a toy and tell them what to do with the toy or you can say _____, let's play _____."

1) Get your friends attention.
2) Give them a toy.
3) Tell them what to do with the toy.
4) Say, "_____, let's play_____."

Step 3 Demonstrate the Right Way

-"Let's practice telling your friend what to do."

-"Now watch me, I'm going to give _____ a toy and tell him/her what to do with the toy. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate the right way)

-"Did I give a toy and tell him/her what to do with the toy?"

-"What did I do?"

-"That's right. I gave _____ a toy and told him/her what to do with the toy."

-Repeat this procedure using different examples of giving a play organizer (for example, "take the sandwich and put it on the plate", "take the cup and put sand in it", "take the thermometer and check the babies temperature.")

-Make sure each child has several opportunities to answer.

Step 4 Demonstrate the Wrong Way

-"Let's practice giving your friend a toy and telling them what to do with the toy."

-"Now watch me. I'm going to give _____ a toy and tell them what to do with the toy. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate the Wrong Way)

-"Did I give _____ a toy and tell them what to do with the toy?"

-"What did I do wrong?"

-"That's right I forgot to _____."

-"Repeat this procedure using different examples of play organizer.

-"Make sure each child has several opportunities to answer."

Step 5 Child Practice with Adult

"Now I want you to practice giving your friend a toy and telling them what to do with the toy. Let's pretend I'm your friend and you're going to give me a toy and tell me what to do with the toy. Remember to:

1) Get my attention
2) Give me a toy.
3) Tell me what to do with the toy.

Use the reminder, "Tell your friend what to do" each time you have the children take a turn. This will help them remember what to do when they hear you say this during a play session.

-"If you forget to tell your friend what to do I'll remind you by pointing to the poster."

Step 6 Practice with the Target Child

"Now we're going to have _____ come over and join us and I'm going to ask you to practice giving him/her a toy and telling what to do with the toy. I'll help you remember by saying "remember to give your friend a toy and tell them what to do with the toy." Remember, you are going to:

1) Get _____'s attention.

2) Give them a toy.
3) Tell them what to do with the toy.

"I want the two of you (the two peers) to take turns giving _____ a toy and telling _____ what to do with the toy.

Step 7 Award Prizes to Students

Give specific praise as to why students are getting prizes (e.g., "you gave your friend toys and told them what to do with the toys" for peers or "You shared with your friends" for target students).

Skill 5
COMPLIMENTS

PREPARATION

Set up one of the following activities: sand, water, housekeeping, or dress-up.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PEERS

"Today we are going to learn more about how to be a good teacher. Sometimes your friends in class do not know how to play with other children. You are going to learn another way to teach them to play.

Step 1 Review Getting You r Friends Attention, Shares, Share Requests, and Play Organizers

Step 2 Describe

"Today we are going to learn more about how to be a good teacher. Sometimes when your friend is playing, he/she likes you when you are nice to him/her. Also, good teachers are always nice to their friends. Here are some ways to be nice to your friends:

1) Say nice things (i.e., "that's it", "good job", "I like that", etc.)
2) Pat them on the shoulder.
3) Give them a High Five."

Step 3 Demonstrate the Right Way

-"Let's practice being nice to your friend."

-"Now watch me. When I tell _____ to _____ and they do it, I'm going to be nice to him/her. Tell me if I do it right." (Demonstrate the Right Way)

-"Was I nice to _____?"

-"What did I do?"

-"That's right. I told _____ to take the toy and when _____ did it I said 'that's right!'".

-Repeat this procedure using different examples of giving a compliment (for example, "take the sandwich and put it on the plate", when the student puts the sandwich on the plate, "Thanks for putting the sandwich on the plate." "Take the thermometer and check the babies temperature." When the

students takes the baby's temperature, "Good job taking the babies temperature.").

-Make sure each child has several opportunities to answer.

Step 4 Demonstrate the Wrong Way

"Let's practice being nice to your friend."

"Now watch me. I'm going to give _____ a toy, and tell them what to do with the toy. Tell me if I'm nice to them." (Demonstrate Without Giving Compliment)

"Was I nice to _____ after I gave them the toy and told them what to do with the toy?"

"What did I do Wrong?"

"That's right. I forgot to say something nice to them."

-Repeat this procedure using different examples of compliments.

-make sure each child has several opportunities to answer.

Step 5 Child Practice with Adult

"Now I want you to practice giving your friend a toy and being nice to them. Let's pretend I'm your friend and you're going to give me a toy. Tell me what to do with the toy, and be nice to me. Remember to:

1) Get my attention.
2) Give me a toy.
3) Tell me what to do with the toy.
4) Say something nice to me when I play with the toy.

Use the reminder, "Be nice to your friend," each time you have the children take a turn. This will help them remember what to do when they hear you say this during a play session.

-"If you forget to be nice to your friend I'll remind you by pointing to the poster."

Step 6 Practice with the Target Child

"Now we're going to have _____ come over and join us and I'm going to ask you

to practice being nice to him/her. I'll help you remember by saying, "remember to be nice to your friend." Remember, you are going to:

1) Get _____'s attention.
2) Give them a toy.
3) Tell them what to do with the toy.
4) Say something nice to them, pat them on the shoulder, give them five.

"I want the two of you (the two peers) to take turns giving _____ a toy and being nice to _____."

Step 7 Award Prizes to Students

Give specific praise as to why students are getting prizes (e.g., "you were very nice to your friend today," for peers or, "You shared with your friends," for target students).

Getting Attention

Tap your friend on the shoulder and call his name.

Strain, Danko, & Lawry 1997

SKILL 1
GETTING ATTENTION

- RATIONALE
- DESCRIBE SKILL

  ✓ LOOK AT FRIEND
  ✓ TAP ON SHOULDER
  ✓ SAY NAME

- DEMONSTRATE

  ✓ RIGHT WAY
  ✓ WRONG WAY

- PRACTICE

Strain, Danko, & Lawry 1997

Share

Share your toys.

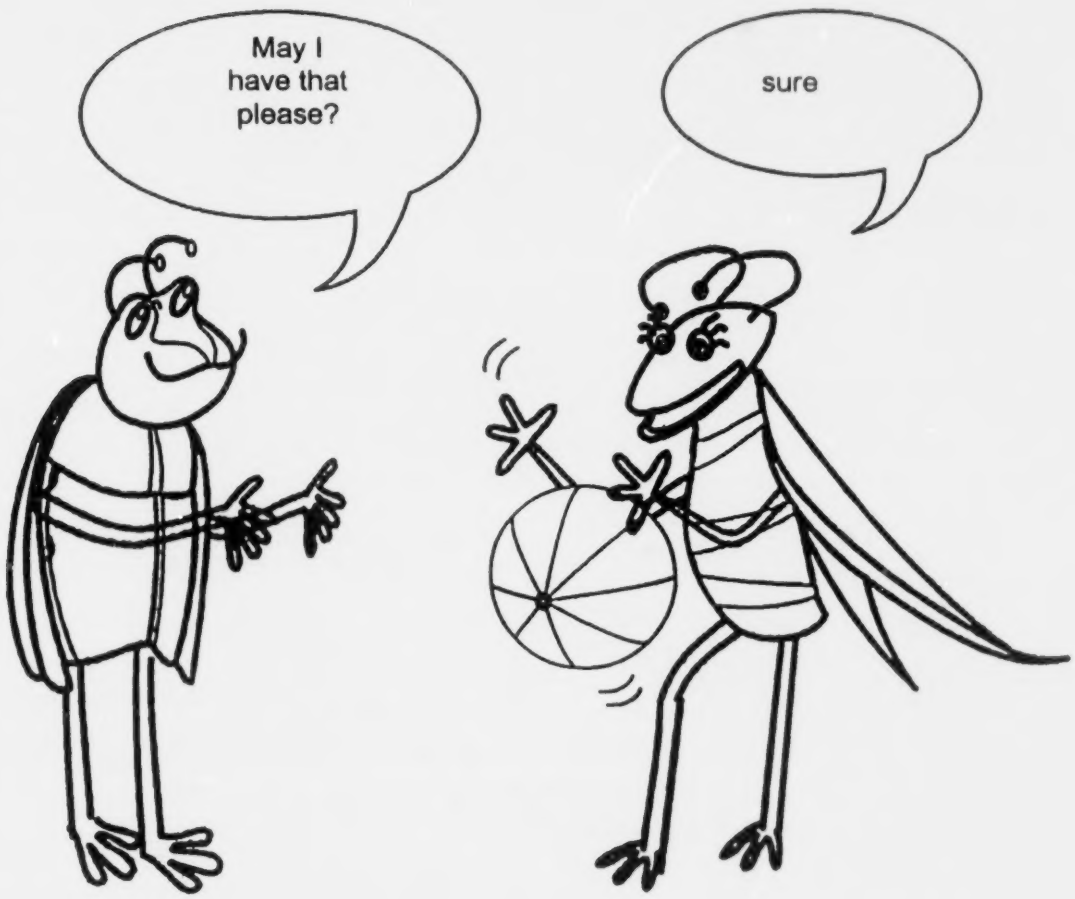
Strain, Danko, & Lawry 1997

SKILL 2
SHARE "GIVING"

- RATIONALE
- DESCRIBE
  - ✓ GET FRIEND'S ATTENTION (LOOK, TAP, CALL)
  - ✓ SAY "HERE"
  - ✓ GIVE TOY TO FRIEND
- DEMONSTRATE
  - ✓ RIGHT WAY
  - ✓ WRONG WAY
- PRACTICE

Strain, Danko, & Lawry 1997

Share Request



Ask your friend if you can play with one of his toys.

* Don't Grab!

Cassie Danko & Lawry 1997

SKILL 3
SHARE REQUEST "ASKING"

- RATIONALE

- DESCRIBE

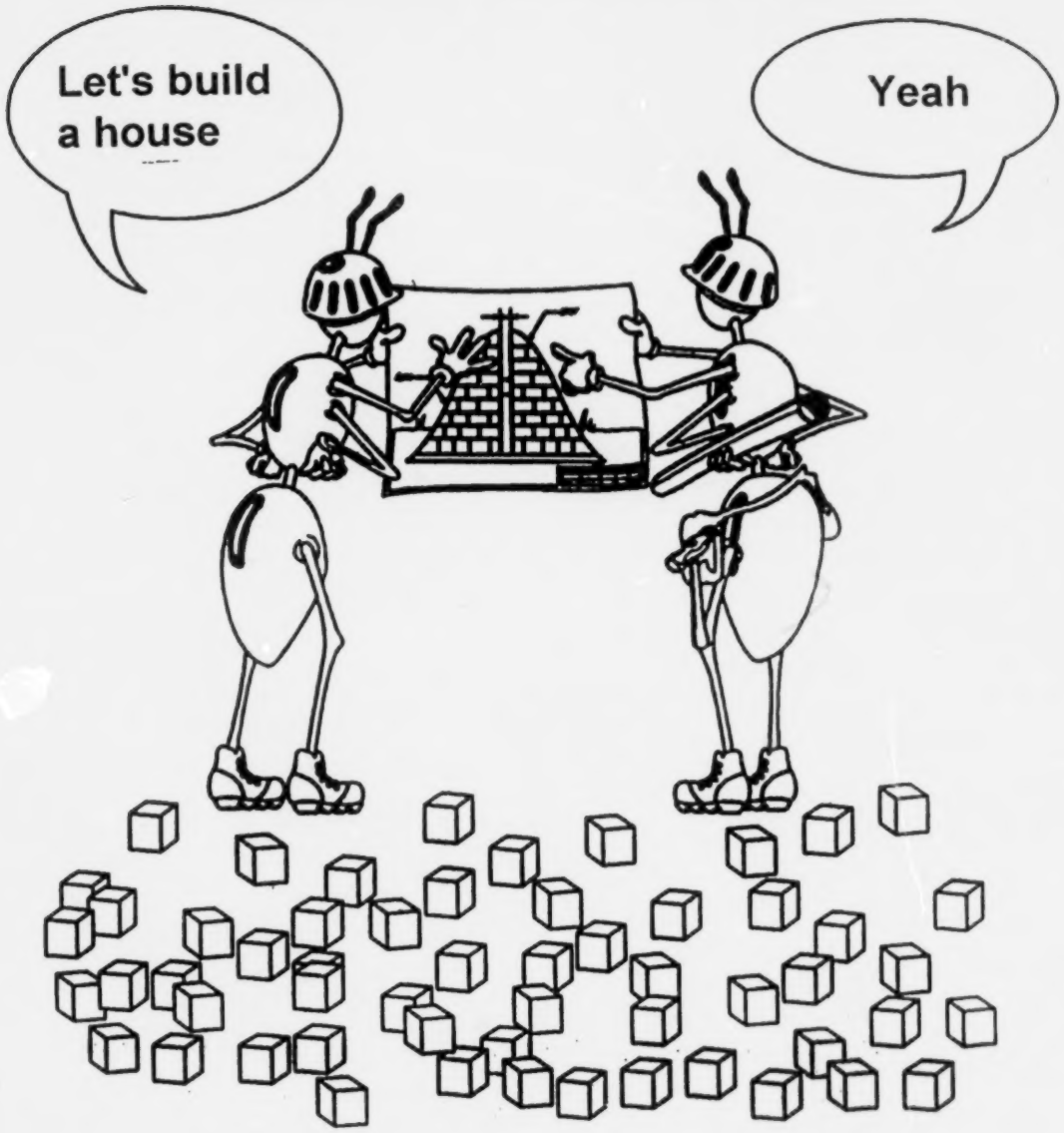
  ✓ GET FRIEND'S ATTENTION (LOOK, TAP, CALL)
  ✓ HOLD OUT HAND
  ✓ ASK FOR TOY

- DEMONSTRATE

  ✓ RIGHT WAY
  ✓ WRONG WAY

- PRACTICE

Give a Play Idea



Give your friend an idea about how you can play together.

SKILL 4

LAY ORGANIZER "GIVING IDEAS"

- RATIONALE

- DESCRIBE
  - ✓ GET ATTENTION
  - ✓ GIVE FRIEND A TOY
  - ✓ GIVE IDEA WHAT TO DO WITH TOY

OR

  - ✓ GIVE IDEA FOR PLAY ACTIVITY OR GAME

- DEMONSTRATE
  - ✓ RIGHT WAY
  - ✓ WRONG WAY

- PRACTICE

Give a Compliment

Let your friend know that he is doing a good job.

Strain, Danko, & Lawry 1997

SKILL 5
COMPLIMENTS

- RATIONALE

- DESCRIBE
  - ✓ VERBAL - SAY THINGS LIKE:
    - "GOOD JOB _____"
    - "GREAT _____"
    - "I LIKE THE WAY YOU _____"
  - ✓ PHYSICAL - DO THINGS LIKE:
    - HUG
    - PAT ON THE SHOULDER
    - HIGH FIVE
- DEMONSTRATE
  - ✓ RIGHT WAY
  - ✓ WRONG WAY

- PRACTICE

Creating the Posters for Social Skills Instruction

The following packet contains pictures, adult cheat sheets, and scripts with which you can teach the children the social skills package. Use the pictures for each skill to create the posters designed to prompt children to practice the skills. Add the adult cheat sheets to the backs of the posters so you can remember the steps for training each skill. Use the scripts as reminders of what to say when completing the training with the children.

The posters can serve two purposes when using the social skills package: 1) They can be displayed during training when you are giving descriptions of the skills, and 2) they can serve as reminders of the skills after the training, when the children are involved in a play activity. Feel free to call the children's attention to them during play and saying. "Remember to _____."

During training you can present the posters while you are describing the skill. Be sure to point out what the pictures represent (e.g., "look, the bug in the picture got the other bug's attention and now he's sharing the soccer ball."). After training, the posters should be placed where the children can easily see them while they are involved in a play activity. You can make several copies to put in all the play centers. Or you can move the posters to where the children are playing. By pointing to these posters and giving verbal reminders you can prompt the children to use the skills which they have learned.

There are five posters representing each of the skills to be taught: 1) Getting your friends attention; 2) Shares; 3) Share requests; 4) Play organizers; 5) Compliments. For each poster there is one picture and a corresponding cheat sheet. The scripts are for familiarizing yourself with the steps within each skill and suggestions on what exactly to say when presenting them.

The following are suggestions for making these posters:

1) Use bright colors to color in the pictures.

2) Poster board may be used as backing for the posters to strengthen them and enable them to last for years to come.

3) If possible, laminate the pictures onto the Poster board.

4) Place the cheat sheet on the back of the poster.

Front

Picture

Back

Skill 1

Rational
Describe skill
Look at friend
Tap on shoulder
Say name
Demonstrate
Right way
Wrong way
Practice

Ways to Incorporate Social Interactions into Your Daily Routine

Circle Time: Greet each child individually and require them to say "hello" back to you. Praise children who independently greet you upon entering the classroom.

Transition Time: Anytime children are going to transition from one group activity to a new activity have them choose a friend to walk over to the next activity with. Prompt a child to stand up, walk over to another child, say their name and hold out their hand. The children should then hold hands and walk together.

Snack Time: When setting up for snack have two children work together to set the table. One child holds the cups and hands a cup to the other child who then sets it next to a napkin. Assign one child at each table to be "Table Captain". The table captain is responsible for the snack and the other children must request the snack from them.

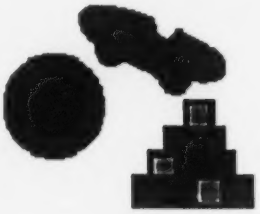
Going Outside: Once the children have their coats on and an adult has connected the zipper, have another child finish zippering the first child's coat. When children come back in prompt them to help each other take their coats off. If a child in the class knows how to tie shoes have them help other children tie their shoes.

Free Play: When the children are outdoors, have them push each other on the swings, make things in the sand box together, and play interactive games such as simple chase games. Praise and give positive attention to children who are helping their friends.

Indoor Play: Set up small gross motor equipment such as see-saws or wooden boats that two children can get on together.

Cleaning Up: Assign children "clean-up" buddies. Make them responsible for certain areas of the classroom. Praise good team work. Give the children stickers or stamps or reinforce working together and helping one another.

18 EASY WAYS TO INCORPORATE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE



1. Have children share during table time
2. Invite peers to prompt children on visual schedules to "check schedule"
3. Ask children to pass out visual props/items during circle time
4. Ask children to collect visual props/items during circle time
5. Prompt children to share song poster prop with a friend
6. Nominate a child as "teacher" to call children up in front of the group and ask where each one wants to play
7. Nominate one or two children as peer models to come in front of the group to sing and sign songs
8. Incorporate a buddy system once a week
9. Entice typical peer(s) to join a special needs child in the work basket area while working on goals/objectives
10. Utilize a "social" gross motor toy in the big motor area that takes two kids to operate

11. Invent "social" transitions to get children from one area to another
12. Arrange a "family style" snack time
13. Pair children up for transitions to outside, library, etc.
14. Plan for a social interaction during obstacle course
15. Sing a "goodbye" song during which children say goodbye and wave to each other individually
16. Conduct puppet shows on social skills
17. Train the children the social skills curriculum
18. Adopt a superstar system to encourage social behaviors

PLANNED & PAINLESS WAYS FOR STAFF TO INCORPORATE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS INTO THE DAILY ROUTINE

TABLE TIME IDEAS

Have a child hand out requested markers ("What color do you want?)
Have a child ask the others "How are you feeling today?" and give the responder the appropriate emotion face.
Invent group art projects that involve more than 1 child working together.
Nominate a "leader" for the day to pass out pictures of the children to put on the Who is at School Today poster.
Create a poster that has a picture of home on one half and a picture of school on the other. At the beginning of the day, all children's photos are under the home picture. Nominate 1 child each day to hand each child their photo to put under the school picture as they come in to school.

CIRCLE TIME IDEAS

Assign a child "greeter" to greet children (saying "hi" or giving a high five) as they come to circle.
Create a book for Skida Ma Rink in which each page has a heart with a picture of a child and his name. When the book is finished, the 1st child gets the child whose picture is on the next page from his. He then sings the song to the 2nd child, and that child gets the next child in the book, etc.
Use puppets to teach social scenarios and the social skills curriculum.
Sing an imitation song "This is what I can do..." in which the child called upon has to imitate a motor action from the first child.
Have a child give the other children reinforcers (stickers, stamps on the hand, etc.) instead of an adult.
Nominate a child as "leader" who asks each child "Where did you play" for recall instead of an adult doing so.
Pair children together for dancing and movement activities.
Pass around a visual prop for group turn-taking songs (i.e., like a plastic cookie for Who Stole the Cookie from the Cookie Jar, or a plastic potato for Hot Potato.

TRANSITION IDEAS

Have children pick a partner to line up with to go outside.
Have 1 child ask another to do an activity (like Mother May I)

CENTER TIME IDEAS

Limit the number of centers open to the children to encourage play in small groups.
When cleaning up have 1 child hand toys to another to put away.
Create group art projects or projects that require more than 1 child to work on them at a time.
Have 2 children at a time at the computer so that one says what he wants to see while the other operates the mouse. Also encourage turn-taking and provide a PECS picture of "my turn" for children who are nonverbal.

SNACK TIME IDEAS

One child passes out the snack that was made at the cooking activity during centers.

QUIET TIME IDEAS

Have children pick a buddy to share a book with/"read" to while in book area.

OUTSIDE IDEAS

Buddy children up with a partner with whom they will play for the first 5 minutes of outside time.

MOTOR GROUP TIME IDEAS

Incorporate at least 1 activity during obstacle course in which each child needs a partner (i.e., wheelbarrow activity where 1 child has another child's feet).
One group is at the tables. One group is doing 3 rounds around the course. When a child finishes his 3rd trip she must find another student at table and say, "its your turn to do obstacle course."

MISCELLANEOUS IDEAS

Have children pick a friend ans say something nice to them that you write down on a heart.
Nominate a child as "the reminder" who reminds children what they forgot to do ("what did you forget, David?).
Catch children doing something nice and write it on a cut-out (like a train or footprints) to put up on the wall with the goal being to surround the classroom with kindness and kind deeds.
Assign a paper towel captain who hands children the paper towels.
Assign a child the job of handing out soap for hand washing.

YOUR IDEAS

Buddy System

The purpose of implementing a buddy system is to increase social interaction and appropriate play among children with and without disabilities in your classroom. It is a nice way to give children experience in learning how to play together, how to compromise, ways to teach others how to play with toys. And in general, how to accept each other.

Materials Needed (optional, depending on whether children can remember who their buddies are):

- 10 sets of matching necklaces (2 red, 2 blue, 2 yellow, etc.)

To use the Buddy System:

1) During the opening circle assign, or have children choose a buddy as they leave to start the play period, (creative ways to have kids choose include making big dice with pictures of all the kids or picking a photo from a hat, bag, or a special "buddy box").

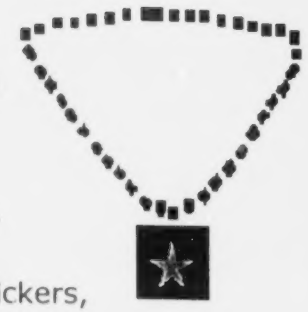
2) Give children direction as to how long they need to stay with their buddy, (e.g., until the timer rings, for the entire play period, etc.).

3) Let children know what you expect them to do with their buddy, (i.e., must agree on the center in which they want to play; they will need to take turns going to each other's play area; they need to play with things together, and work together; etc.).

4) When you gather for circle again, you can ask the children, "Did you play with your buddy?" or "What did you do with your buddy today?" If you indeed saw them playing/talking/compromising, etc. each buddy in the pair earns a small reward (i.e., sticker, stamp on hand, applause, etc.).

5) You can use the buddy system everyday, twice a week, twice a day, etc. depending on what works for your classroom.

Superstar System



The purpose of a Superstar System is to increase social interactions and appropriate play in your classroom.

Materials Needed:

- Make approximately 10 5-inch stars on heavy paper and decorate them so they have lots of kid appeal (i.e., use favorite cartoon characters, faux gems, stickers, etc.).
- Laminate them and attach yarn necklaces.
- Put them in a specially decorated box/container.

To use the Superstars:

1) Decide upon some behavior you want to see from the students (i.e., sharing, saying nice things to friends, cleaning up together, helping each other/working together on projects).

2) Review the behaviors with the children during circle time each day. Model the behaviors for the children and have them demonstrate them during circle.

3) Tell the kids you will be watching them to see when they do these things with their friends. (Make it clear to them that you will *not* be awarding Superstars to kids who come up and tell you they just shared, for example, but you will award stars to kids who do these things without the teacher watching).

4) When you see the children doing these behaviors tell them to go and pick out a Superstar to put on.

5) When you gather for circle again, individually call each child who has earned a Superstar up to the front of the circle with you to tell the group what they did to earn the Superstar.

6) Have the child choose a special item (e.g., a sticker, a stamp on the hand, a special song the group will sing, group applause, a Barney roar, a yabba dabba doo form the group, etc.).

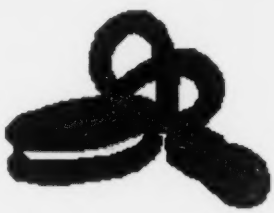
Family Style Snack

Snack time is a great time to promote interactions between children with and without disabilities. By simply arranging the environment you can encourage children to make requests from, and pass objects to, their peers. This is often the first social interaction that will occur between children with low social skills and their classmates.

- Arrange the snack tables into two groups with 6-7 children at each table.
- Assign four children (or have them choose on the daily job board) the following jobs: "Snack Captain" and "Drink Captain".
- Each table should have one "Snack Captain" and one "Drink Captain".
- Place the snack on a large plastic plate and give it to the "Snack Captain".
- Pour the juice into a child size picture and give it to the "Drink Captain".
- Children are instructed that in order to get their snack and drink they should:

1. Say their friends name, "Kerry"
2. Ask for the snack, "Pass the cookies, please."
3. Take their snack and then give the plate back to the "Snack Captain".

This is a good way to encourage children with disabilities to initiate to their peers rather than always relying on adults to meet their need. Also, having the children pour their own juice is a great way to work on hand-eye coordination in a naturally occurring setting.



Peer Books

This is a great activity for encouraging peer recognition. Children with autism often do not pay attention to or seek out their peers. This book will help them become more aware of the kids in their class and provide them a more concrete way to learn their names.

- ✂ Take pictures or ask parents to send in photos for each child in the class.
- ✂ Make a book with colorful construction paper, or buy a small photo album. (If you choose to make a book you will need to laminate it.)
- ✂ Mount each child's photo with their name below it.
- ✂ Keep the book in the book area of the classroom.
- ✂ Give each child a chance to take the book home over a weekend to share it with their family.

For children with autism who have difficulty with social interactions, you may want to have individual books made for the home. (Ask the child's parent to send in a Polaroid or disposable camera to school.) Encourage parents to read the books often, point out children and ask questions. For children who are non-verbal the goal could be to point to a child when asked, "Where is Emily?" If the child is verbal the goal should be to expressively identify classmates.

Peer Statues

The goal of peer statues is similar to that of peer books with an added opportunity to work on socio-dramatic play. Pretend play is especially difficult for children with autism it is so abstract. Here is a great way to make it concrete!!!

- ✎ Take full length pictures of the children in your class to make a little statue of each child.
- ✎ Mount the pictures on cardboard or oaktag.
- ✎ Laminate photos and position on stands. (We use large, black binder clips with the silver grips removed)

Encourage the children to reenact familiar activities such as circle time, snack time, Duck, Duck, Goose, riding the bus to school. Things they do everyday, or see other kids they know doing everyday.

Fun Things to Do with Peer Statues

I. IN GENERAL

1) Use for role playing during:
   - Circle Time
   - Conflict Resolution
   - Going on the bus
   - Acting out Social Stories

II. TABLE AREA

1) Use with board games
2) Make necklaces out of beads for statues

III. BLOCK AREA

1) Play house with statue or puppets as the people
2) Pretend they are driving cars, trains, trucks, etc.
3) Children can use large blocks to build houses for statues
4) Children can add animals and pretend to visit the zoo, etc. with their statues

IV. ART AREA

1) Children can use statues as a model for drawing their friends

V. SOCIO-DRAMATIC AREA

1) Cooking for friends (statues) - place the statue on the table in front of chairs
2) Teachers can make outfits for statues to wear (i.e., policeman, fireman, housewife, nurse, doctor, dentist, etc.) and children can dress them like paper dolls

VI. AT HOME

1) Statues and/or puppets can be used to relate what happened at school that day
2) Role play activities from the school day (i.e., circle time, duck duck goose, etc.)
3) Play school

Friendship Activities

Here are some ideas on how you can adapt your large group activities (circle time, etc.) To help promote social interactions between children. These ideas were taken from, "A Socialization Curriculum for Preschool Programs that Integrate Children with Handicaps" (Brown, Ragland & Bishop, 1989).

Friendship activities are traditional large group activities that have been adapted to promote more social behavior among children (such as, hugs, high fives, hand shakes, sharing, complimenting, tickling, etc..).These may be activities that you already do during your circle time, or ones that you are interested in trying with your children. Using these activities can be beneficial to both children with special needs as well as children with typical development.

When using friendship activities, there is some teacher planning and preparation required. You should observe the children in your classroom to determine which children may benefit the most from participating in these activities. This is important so you can help make sure these children have a chance for participation, as well as trying to pair these children with more social peers in the classroom. You should also plan which activity you will use that day.

We have provided you with examples of ways you can modify traditional group activities into "Friendship Activities." The following table gives some general ideas on how to promote different types of interactions along with some examples of praise statements.

Group Socialization	Prompts		Praise Statement
Physical:	Verbal:	General:	Specific:
Hug a friend	Tell your neighbor hello	Great!	Great Listening!
Tickle your neighbor	Tell your neighbor you like her	Good!	Good following directions!
Pat on the back, foot, arm, head, shoulder, knee, tummy, leg, etc.	Tell your neighbor you are friends	Terrific!	Thank you for paying attention!
Hold hands	Tell your neighbor s/he is nice	Fantastic!	Terrific singing!
Shake hands	Tell your friend you are happy	Beautiful!	I like the way you.....
High five	Say something nice to friend	Excellent!	You are being such good friends!
Scratch neighbor's back	Give a compliment to a friend	Super!	Thanks for participating!
Wink at a friend	Tell a friend you like him/her	Wonderful!	You are doing a beautiful job of playing together!
Do the bump	Tell a friend you like his/her __	All Right!	You are working so nicely on becoming friends!
Link arms			You are behaving beautifully!
Rub friend's tummy			I like the way you sit & listen while I'm talking!
Touch shoulders with friend			
Touch elbows with friend			

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Simon Says	First explain the rules of the game, adding that today the game will be played a little differently so that we can become better friends (you can also add a discussion of friendship). Play the game by instructing children to have physical and verbal contact with other children in the class. Examples: "Simon says... touch your neighbor's head; say "you're special" to someone wearing blue; its time for a group hug. Be sure to be enthusiastic and give the children lots of praise for their interactions.
Musical Carpet Squares	Explain the traditional rules of the game and encourage the children to sing and dance or move while walking around the carpet squares. In this version of the game, whoever does not have a square when the music stops must share a square with someone else who does have a square (at least one part of their body must be touching the square or touching someone on the square). Following each round of must, have the children engage in some physical interactions before beginning the next round of music (e.g., touch your pinkies together, shake hands with a friend, touch you toes with a neighbor's toes). If a target child does not lose his/her carpet square early in the game, encourage other children to join the child once they have lost their squares. Praise children throughout the activity.
Hokey Pokey	After discussing friendship with the children, tell them that you will be singing "Hokey Poker" with new words so it can be more fun. Here are some new directions: 1) Put your right hand on a head, put your right hand on a back Put your right hand on a hand, and you shake it all about Do the hokey pokey and we play with all our friends what its all about! 2) Shake your neighbor's hand in, (towards inside of circle) Shake your neighbor's hand out, shake your neighbor's hand in Then you shake it all about (repeat ending above). 3) We touch hands in, we touch hands out 4) We high five in, we high five out... 5) We bump a friend in, we bump a friend out... Be sure to praise and prompt appropriate interactions between the children. Make sure the game moves quickly and that all the children have fun!
Hot Potato	Tell the children that you will be changing the game Hot Potato to "Mashed Potatoes" and that in this game the children will pass imaginary mashed potatoes from one child to another. The mashed potatoes are messy and tend to stick to your hands. When you pass them, you must be sure to play your hands on your partner's hand and wipe them (front and back) to get all of the potatoes off of your hands. Your partner should help you wipe all the mashed potatoes off your hands. When the must stops, the two children "passing" the mashed potatoes should engage in a physical interaction (i.e., hug, high fives, etc.). Then all of the children should do the same interaction. Continue playing using various interactions between rounds. If possible, try coming up with a prop for children to be able to pass around the circle (that has the characteristics of these sticky mashed potatoes).

May I?	Begin by talking about friends and tell the children that today they will need to say "May I be friends?" to you before they can do things. When playing, be sure to include a lot of group and individual instructions to interact. The following interactions can be included: 1) Give a neighbor a high five and take five steps 2) Say "Happy friends" and then... 3) Sing "Row Your Boat" and take three rowing steps with a friend near you 4) Go back to the beginning and tickle the first three friends you see 5) All the boys go back to the beginning and hold hands and take...
Follow the Leader	After explaining the traditional rules of the game let the children know that the game will be played with two or more people doing things together. Tell the children that when it is their turn to be the leader that they need to do something that friends would do. Give them some examples such as holding hands, dancing, high fives or back rubs and begin by modeling good interactions with a child as you lead the game. After each turn have the children change partners. Then choose two new leaders for the next round. You may want to be near the leaders so that you can readily offer new suggestions or suggest alternatives for activities that may not be appropriate for the group. Be sure to praise the children for good interactions.
Duck, Duck, Goose	Tell the children that you will be playing Duck, Duck, Goose in a new way so that we can all become better friends. Explain that today, after two children chase each other around the circle, you will tell both of them something to do to be better friends (shake hands, high fives, hugs, etc.). After the two children show everyone how they will be better friends, have all the children do the same behavior with a neighbor.
If You're Happy and You Know It	After explaining the traditional roles of the song tell the children that it will be played in a new way so you can become better friends. When the children sing "If you're happy..." the words will be changed so listen carefully (use a variety of phrases and physical interactions while playing): 1) "If you're happy and you know it, shake a hand...." 2) "If you're happy and you know it, hug a friend..." 3) "If you're happy and you know it, do the bump..." 4) "If you're happy and you know it, high five a friend..."
Button, Button, Who's Got the Button	First explain the traditional rules of the game and then tell the children that you will be playing it a different way to become better friends. Watch carefully and try to guess who had the button. If you guess incorrectly, shake hands with the person. If you guess correctly, hug the person. Then we will all high five with our neighbors before we play the next round (continue playing using a variety of social interactions).

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✏COLLECTING DATA ON SOCIAL SKILLS

This data collection system is especially helpful for children that have difficulty socializing with peers in the classroom. Staff should use this data sheet if they: a) are contemplating adding the social skills curriculum to their classroom to get a baseline reading of the child's skills before intervention, as well as to gage how much the strategies effect the child's social efforts after training; b) have a child with a lot of social IEP goals/objectives; and c) want to compare typical peers with a child you suspect may have some deficits socially and otherwise.

This system is identical to the previous one (daily behavior/medication) except that the dimensions are different. Scoring for both systems is identical. The five categories for the social data sheet are:

1) Giving Object on Peer Request = Child turns object over to a peer, either putting it in his/her hand or simply giving it up, after one or two requests by the peer.
2) Accepting Object Handed by Peer = Child holds out hand for peer or takes object from peer as opposed to ignoring peer's offer or throwing the object back at the peer.
3) Visually Attends to Peer During Play = Makes eye contact with peer, watches peer or imitates peer, does not look around the room or attend to other toys, peers, etc.
4) Appropriately Accepts Peer Assistance = Does not become distressed at peer's assistance or try to push peer away, but instead allows assistance, imitates peers, or becomes involved in positive interaction.
5) Follow Simple Peer Directions = Follows a direction that is easily understandable and is easy for the child to comply with after a reasonable amount of time.

SOCIAL INTERACTION RATING SHEET

Child: _____

DATE																									
Gives Object on Peer Request	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Never Gives Object on Peer Request	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accepts Object Handed by Peer	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Never Accepts Object Handed by Peer	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Visually Attends to Peer During Play	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Never Attends to Peer During Play	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Appropriately Accepts Peer Assistance	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Never Appropriately Accepts Peer Assistance	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Follows Simple Peer Directions	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Never Follows Simple Peer Directions	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

69

70

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PRESCHOOL special focus

The Early Childhood Social Skills Program

Making Friends During the Early Childhood Years

Frank W. Kohler • Phillip S. Strain

The development of positive interaction skills is important during the preschool years for a number of reasons. For one thing, these skills form the foundation for positive peer relationships and friendships in later life. Peer interactions also enable children to acquire and practice pivotal language skills that are exclusive to child-child exchanges (Guralnick, 1981). Finally, children acquire a wide range of additional competencies during peer interactions, including resolution of conflicts over toys, sharing play materials, enacting dramatic play roles, and displaying or responding to social affection (Hartup, 1983).

The teacher closely observes the session and promotes positive play interactions.

Unfortunately, some children do not learn to interact positively with peers on their own. Preschoolers with various types of developmental delays typically ignore, disrupt, or direct social aggression toward other children. A major task for early childhood educators, then, is to teach these youngsters the skills necessary to interact with and learn from their socially competent peers.

The Early Childhood Social Skills Program was developed to accomplish this task (Odom, Kohler, & Strain, 1987). Unlike many traditional programs, both children with social delays and normally developing children receive formal teaching for social interaction skills. Children with a wide range of developmental delays have participated in this intervention program over the past 10 years (Strain, 1985). The remainder of this article will describe the Early Childhood Social Skills Program.

Program Structure and Organization

The program is designed for classwide implementation. A group of 8 to 12 children with social delays and socially competent youngsters participate together in two phases of the program. Children learn a variety of play overture skills during a formal teacher instruction phase. Once learned, these skills are used in a more independent and spontaneous fashion during a child rehearsal phase.

All teacher instruction and child rehearsal sessions occur during a 10-minute daily interaction period. The intervention sessions are structured as follows:

- Several small groups of children (including one child with delays and two to three typical peers) participate for 10 minutes per day.
- The activity materials are arranged to promote high levels of social interaction and associative play. Four to six different dramatic-play, manipulative, or motor activities are rotated on successive days.
- The teacher facilitates positive exchanges and sustained play between the children with delays and their peers throughout each activity.

The social skills taught in this program include (a) making offers and requests to share; (b) offering play suggestions; (c) making offers and requests to give assistance; (d) showing affection; and (e) giving compliments. The children learn three different strategies for using these social overtures. First, they use each skill to *initiate* play interactions with another child. For example, a child might extend an offer to share to a classmate who is playing alone. Second, the children learn to *respond positively* to peer initiations. Using the previous example, the youngster with social delays might respond to the more socially competent peer's offer to share by accepting the item offered. Finally, the children learn to *be persistent* in their use of initiation and response strategies. Social initiations that are ignored or refused are followed with more elaborate overtures.

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Program Implementation

Three steps are necessary for effective implementation of this program. They are described in sequential order.

Step 1. Scheduling Structured Activity Times. As indicated earlier, all teacher instruction and child rehearsal sessions occur during a 10-minute daily play period. This primary activity should occur at the same time each day and employ play materials that are commonly found in most preschool classrooms (i.e., dramatic, manipulative, or motor type materials). Two to three small groups of children may participate in this activity. After observing the children's initial performance, the teacher identifies two or three youngsters who frequently ignore, disrupt, or direct social aggression toward other children. These children are placed in small groups with two or three more socially competent peers.

Step 2. Conducting the Teacher Instruction Phase. Once a primary activity has been scheduled and the composition of the play groups determined, the teacher teaches social interaction skills and strategies. These instructional sessions are highly structured. Social interaction skills are taught sequentially. That is, sharing is taught first, followed by making play suggestions, giving assistance, showing affection, and giving compliments.

Teaching of each skill entails three separate steps. First, the teacher describes the strategies for using that skill (i.e., initiation, response, and persistence). Next, the teacher demonstrates the strategy for all group members. Third, the children perform the skill with adult assistance. The teacher helps them acquire the skills by providing continual instructions, feedback, and praise.

Teacher instruction sessions continue until the group members can perform all five skills without teacher assistance. Socially competent peers must be able to initiate, respond (i.e., continue), and persist in their play overtures to children having social delays. Youngsters with delays must demonstrate an ability to respond favorably to peer overtures. In many cases, these children also learn to make several types of social initiations.

Step 3. Conducting the Child Rehearsal Phase. After completing the teacher instruction phase, children perform the social interaction skills and strategies in a more naturalistic play setting. Child rehearsal sessions are conducted in the following manner.

The teacher provides brief instructions prior to each play session. Children are reminded of the appropriate skills and strategies for that activity.

The teacher closely observes the session and promotes positive play interactions with occasional reminders and praise. Since socially competent children have already learned the basic social interaction skills and strategies, they are continually encouraged to demonstrate spontaneous and creative forms of social initiations and responses. Children's ability to demonstrate natural forms of play overtures without teacher assistance increases their likelihood of using positive social skills outside of the intervention setting (e.g., during freeplay activities).

The overall goal of the program is to generate high levels of associative play between the children with delays and their socially competent peers. To accomplish this objective, children are expected to exchange the desired skills throughout the *entire* 8-minute structured play period. The teacher provides verbal feedback to the entire group after the session.

Of course, the children continue to have opportunities to interact with their classmates during other school activities such as transitions, show and tell, and snack time. In fact, teachers who want to maximize children's social gains might develop interventions to suit these different activities.

Conclusion

Our research over the past decade indicates that preschool children gain a wide range of benefits from the Early Childhood Social Skills Program (Strain, 1985). First, youngsters with a wide range of developmental disabilities including autism, mental retardation, and visual impairments have acquired the skills necessary to engage in positive interactions with their socially competent peers (Strain, 1985). We have found that children often continue to interact positively during school activities at other times of the day (Kohler, Strain, Maretsky, & DeCesare, 1990). Second, children enjoy the structure of the daily teaching sessions and respond favorably to the special teacher attention and praise that are provided during this period. Most important, this program enables youngsters with developmental delays to establish positive relationships and friendships with other children.

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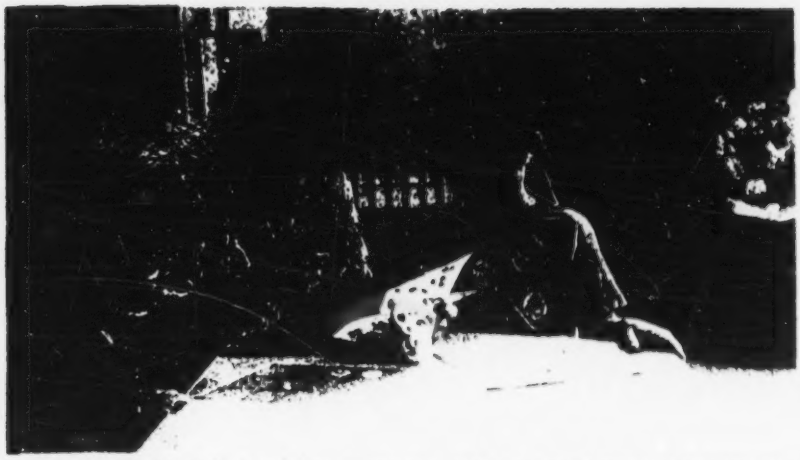
"Buddy Skills" for Preschoolers



During the "Buddy Skills" training procedure, stickers can be used at the end of a session to reinforce success. These reinforcers will be eliminated as social reinforcers (friendship) take over.

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You have an inclusive preschool. You have children with a wide range of abilities, including children with disabilities. You want the children to work and play together—to be friends. One way many teachers encourage positive social relationships is by using the buddy system.

This article describes a buddy system that helps children work—and play—together more cooperatively throughout the day. It is child-tested and teacher-approved. Follow these 11 steps to "preschooler peer 'preciation."

Figure 1 summarizes the sequence of the 11 steps of the "Buddy Skills" training procedure. An explanation of each step follows.

Step 1. Initial Assessment

Before you conduct Buddy Skills training, make an inventory of the potential buddies in your classroom, weighing factors like the maturity of the children without disabilities, the social and communicative levels of the children with disabilities, and any shared interests in particular activities (e.g., playing similar games, or using similar materials). We recommend matching genders when possible. We also recommend that the pairing be considered a long-term match (although not necessarily exclusive); extended time is needed for friendships to develop in any situation.

Step 2. Pretraining/ Sensitization

Children without disabilities often fail to notice or sometimes misinterpret the communicative or play attempts of a child with a disability (Goldstein & Kaczmarek, 1991; Goldstein, Kaczmarek, Pennington, & Shafer, 1992). The goal of the first 20-min pretraining session is to sensitize children to these communicative attempts.

In a small group, lead a discussion with peers without disabilities about different ways children in their class might communicate: with voices, signs, or gestures, or with varying response times and sometimes unclear intent. The use of videotaped samples of classmates at play can be used to help peers focus on, recognize, and interpret the intended meaning of subtle or ambiguous communicative acts.

Because it is difficult to generalize about children's unique communication strategies, we recommend that you use videotapes of actual classmates rather than unknown children. For example, the teachers and peers might view a 2-min videotape of a 4-year-old girl sitting on a chair at a table. They observe that three times she tries to get the attention of children walking by, but is unintelligible and therefore is ignored. Finally, she gets up and pulls on the hand of an adult, leading her to the table. She points to a disassembled puzzle on the table.

The teacher discusses with the peers:

- What did the girl want?
- How did she try to get what she wanted?
- How did she tell other children?
- Why didn't other children answer her?
- How did she tell the adult what she wanted without using words?

The teacher and peers might go on to view another video segment of a classmate who throws a toy after trying unsuccessfully to participate in a play interaction. Each segment is discussed in the same manner.

If videotaping is not an option, demonstrate with role-playing some of the communicative and play behaviors observed in the classroom, and conduct the same type of discussion.

Learning how children use different abilities and strategies to communicate will help generate discussion on how to respond to those behaviors. Here are some questions for discussion:

- What should we do if we can't understand what our classmate is saying?
- What does it mean if he or she points or reaches for a toy?
- Will questions help, such as "Do you want this truck? Do you want to share this book with me?"

Explain to the children that responses to such questions from a child with a disability may be delayed or unclear. Discuss the need to take extra time to

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understand. During this pretraining session, take time to discuss what the concepts of "friendship" and "being a buddy" mean to the peers.

Step 3. Peer Training

Follow the sensitization session with two 20-min training sessions for children without disabilities, on two consecutive days, if possible. The training sessions will teach three Buddy Skills: to *STAY, PLAY,* and *TALK* with their buddy (a child with a disability). After the peers have learned the Buddy steps, show them how to apply the three steps with in-class guided practice. The following is a format for the two sessions.

Session 1. STAY and PLAY with Your Buddy

Teach the peers to maintain proximity with their buddy during free play, sit with them during snack and group activities, and participate in play activities with their buddy.

Teach the peers that to STAY with their buddy means to "stick close." When approaching a buddy for the first time, the peer is asked to get the buddy's attention by saying hello, using the buddy's name, tapping on the arm, and asking the buddy to play with them. If during free play their buddy moves from one activity to another, they are to follow.

Then show the peers that to STAY and PLAY with a buddy means: While "sticking close" to their buddy, they can join in the activity in which their buddy is participating, bring a toy over if the buddy is not playing, or ask the buddy to join in an ongoing activity. If the first suggestions do not appeal to the buddy, encourage the peer to think of other play activities, while maintaining proximity. During Buddy Skills training in our preschool classrooms, the peers practiced these steps with adult modeling, and received token reinforcement (e.g., stickers or stamps on a chart) for demonstrating competency. These may be replaced with whatever reinforcement systems are most successful within different classrooms and with different children.

Session 2. STAY, PLAY, and TALK with Your Buddy

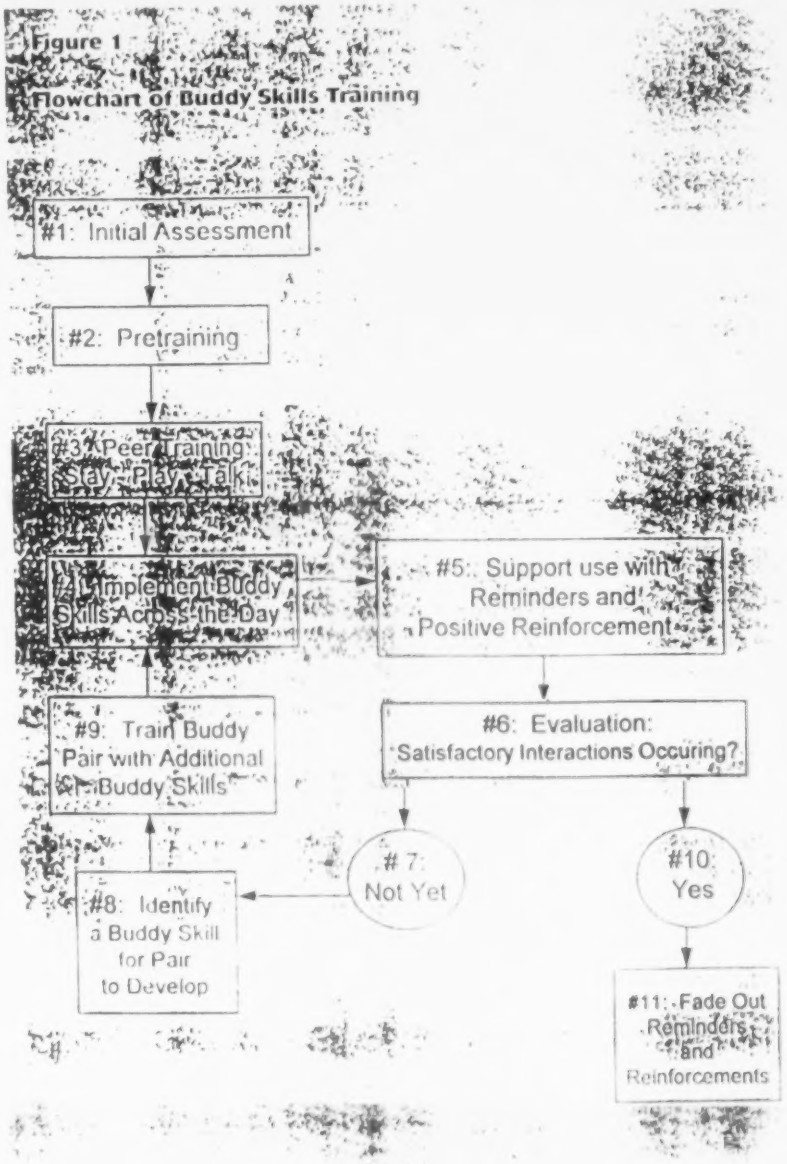
Teach the peers to add a new step to "stay and play." STAY, PLAY, and TALK with a buddy involves additional interaction and communication, such as talking about the ongoing actions of the buddy or themselves, the toys (their colors, shapes, names, parts, or other attributes), or the actions and uses of the toys, as well as watching and responding to the communicative attempts of their buddy. In our classrooms, the peers again practiced all three steps with adult modeling, and received token reinforcement when mastery was demonstrated.

This phase of training ends when the peers are able to use these three steps in a chain without being told what to do, for at least two consecutive role-playing episodes. For some children, more than two training sessions may be required.

In-class Guided Practice

Allow the children without disabilities to try these Buddy Skills in class with a peer who has a disability. This practice serves as a transition activity from the controlled training situation to the classroom envi-

Figure 1
Flowchart of Buddy Skills Training


#1: Initial Assessment
#2: Pretraining
#3: Peer Training Stay, Play, Talk
#4: Implement Buddy Skills Across the Day
#5: Support use with Reminders and Positive Reinforcement
#6: Evaluation: Satisfactory Interactions Occuring?
#7: Not Yet
#8: Identify a Buddy Skill for Pair to Develop
#9: Train Buddy Pair with Additional Buddy Skills
#10: Yes
#11: Fade Out Reminders and Reinforcements

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What Does the Research Say About "Peer Interactions"?

As preschool programs continue to include children with disabilities, many educators contemplate how to promote friendships in their classrooms. Uditsky (1993) discussed the normative pathway to childhood friendship:

> For children, the normative pathways of childhood support and encourage opportunities to play together informally and formally, resulting in the preparation of milestones, making discoveries together and following each other's leads. These are the pathways that adults clearly need to support. (p. 94)

Physical placement in an integrated program alone, however, may not sufficiently *encourage opportunities to play together*. Without direction and support, children with disabilities are more likely to interact with adults than with other children. In addition, children without disabilities are more likely to play together and not interact with children with disabilities (Beckman, 1983; Goldstein & Gallagher, 1992; Strain, 1984).

Educators have designed peer-mediated interventions that teach preschoolers a set of *initiation strategies* (Day, Powell, Dy-Liacco, & Stowitschek, 1982; Odom, Hoyson, Jamieson, & Strain, 1985). Although research has been promising, there has been concern for the lack of generalization—that is, the inability of the peers to generalize the use of these strategies in activities across the classroom.

ronment. During this time, help the peer stay on task and apply the steps to new situations.

Step 4. Implement Across the Day

Decide on three activities across the day (e.g., free play, snack time, and a structured activity) where the peer can be a buddy. To *keep "costs" at a minimum*, ask the peer to be a buddy for only a portion (4-5 min) of the activity, or share the role with other peers. This should reduce the possibility of peers losing interest or becoming anxious during interactions.

Step 5. Support Use with Reminders and Positive Reinforcement

You may find it useful to have a hierarchy of reminders or prompts. Friendships among children with and without disabilities may require a great deal of support and encouragement. Simply teaching Buddy Skills will usually not ensure mutually satisfying interactions. *Reminders and reinforcements ("rewards") help children try new social skills* with a friend or in a new activity.

Initially, you may give a combination of verbal and visual prompts. Examples of verbal prompts include: "Tell me the Buddy Skills. Show me how to use them with Erica," or "Remember to talk to your buddy when you're playing." Examples of visual prompts include: a "thumbs-up" signal, or the sign for "friend." In our program, peers were positively reinforced with verbal praise or tokens for the way they "stayed, played, and talked" with their buddies during classroom activities across the day.

Step 6. Evaluation: Is Satisfactory Interaction Occurring?

Observe and evaluate the quality of the interaction resulting from the peers' use of the Buddy Skills. The first attempts at "being a buddy" usually do not result in social or communicative reciprocity. Following are typical early buddy behaviors, illustrated by Jacob (a child with a disability) and Erik (a peer without disabilities):

- Erik asks a question, but Jacob does not respond.
- Jacob asks for help, but Erik doesn't pay attention. Jacob does not repeat the request.

Through observations of these kinds, you may determine either that satisfactory interactions are "not yet" occurring (Step 7), or that the training has resulted in a relationship that is mutually enjoyable (proceed to Step 10).

Step 7. Not Yet

If you observe that mutually enjoyable interactions are not happening, make the determination that satisfactory interactions are "Not Yet" occurring, which leads to the beginning of a Buddy Pair training cycle (Steps 8 and 9, and repeating Steps 4, 5, and 6).

Step 8. Identify a Buddy Skill for the Pair to Develop

Choose a skill that will improve the give-and-take of the interaction between the buddies, based on your observation of the pair's interactions ("following each other's leads," Uditsky, 1993, p. 94). These skills may include using attention-getters (e.g., arm taps or verbalizations), responding to questions, and taking turns.

For example, in the Jacob-and-Erik example:

- If Jacob does not respond to a request from Erik, his new Buddy Skill will be to look when his arm is tapped, or look when his name is called. Erik in turn will be taught to respond with a smile, eye contact, and repetition of the request when Jacob responds to the arm-tap or the use of his name.
- If Erik doesn't pay attention to a request, Jacob's new Buddy Skill is to get Erik's attention with an arm touch or other attention-getter, and to "ask again" and point to the item of interest. Erik, in turn, is taught to look in the direction of the item, and ask questions to find out Jacob's intent.

The cycle of Buddy Training should convey to both members of the Buddy Pair that they have *mutual responsibility* in the interaction and that both are expected to understand and respond to each other.

Step 9. Teach Buddy Pair a New Buddy Skill

When you have identified the new Buddy Skill, teach the pair *together* so that both partners learn the new skill. This will help support a growing mutual invest-

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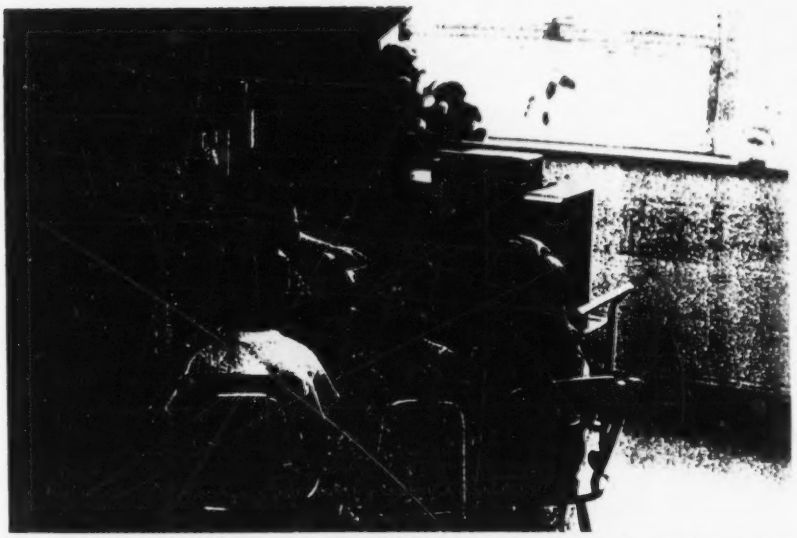
ment in the developing relationship. Conduct this training across the day in various activities, and continue it over several days, until both children use the new skill.

Repeat Steps 4 and 5: Implement New Buddy Skill Across-the-Day

Once each member of the pair demonstrates the new skill, implement buddy interaction again across the school day. Continue to support the use of the Buddy Skills with the use of *reminders* and *reinforcers*.

Repeat Step 6: Evaluation: Is Satisfactory Interaction Occurring?

Again, observe the children to evaluate the effects of prior training. Initially, there may be room for much improvement, so it is likely that after one Buddy Skill is mastered by the Buddy Pair, another developmentally appropriate Buddy Skill may suggest itself. For example, after Jacob learns to look when his name is called, and Erik learns to respond with eye contact and a smile and a request to play, Jacob's next step is to provide a verbal or nonverbal response (such as a head nod or a verbal acknowledgment).



One strategy that will improve communication between buddy partners is eye contact and a friendly smile.

Typically, the peer may need to develop a new skill in response to the skill recently mastered by the child with a disability, and vice versa. If so, repeat the training cycle. Through these training cycles, both children can add to their repertoire of Buddy Skills. These common repertoires and shared experiences should facilitate social interactions.

Step 10. Yes

At some point, your observations may confirm that the quality of the interaction resulting from the use of the Buddy Skills has resulted in a fairly balanced, reciprocal relationship—a friendship is developing. Reduce adult intervention by proceeding to Step 11.

Step 11. Fade Out Reminders and Reinforcement

Decrease reminders and reinforcements. For example, if you have initially awarded stickers at the end of each session that the Buddy Skills are practiced (three times a day), you may delay these tokens and replace them with praise. Say, "Good job, you two! I like the way you're playing together. Keep up the good work—I'll hold on to these stickers now until the end of the day." Postpone the stickers until the end of the school day, and soon

What Are "Buddy Skills"?

We developed "Buddy Skills" to promote generalization of peer relationships across the day. The Buddy Skills program is an application of "social exchange theory" (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978), which states that the rewards of a potential relationship must outweigh the cost for each participant if the relationship is to be mutually satisfying.

- Rewards are the factors that reinforce behaviors, such as enjoyment, satisfaction, or task completion.
- Costs are factors that inhibit behaviors, such as embarrassment, anxiety, or excessive effort.

The Buddy Skills intervention attempts to *reduce the costs* and *increase the rewards* of relationship development between preschoolers with and without disabilities by teaching social-communication skills to both partners in a Buddy Pair. Each partner is asked to *share responsibility for the relationship* by developing a reciprocity in their social exchanges (Gaylord-Ross, Haring, Breen, & Pitts-Conway, 1984).

The Buddy Skills program was tested in three integrated preschool classrooms composed of one-third children without disabilities and two-thirds children with mild-to-moderate disabilities. Positive effects were noted in the relationships between each Buddy Pair, and teachers indicated that the training procedures were appropriate for class use. Anecdotal observations by teachers indicated that some generalization of the learned Buddy Skills occurred (e.g., Buddy Pairs held hands while walking to other activities, saved seats for the buddy partner for snack and calendar, and extended invitations to play without prompting). The program also was found to be socially valid by three panels of objective evaluators, who viewed randomly ordered videotapes and rated postintervention videos as displaying more and better interactions between Buddy Pairs.

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During Step 2, students without disabilities observe a videotape to help them understand subtle or ambiguous communicative acts of students with disabilities.

you will be able to delay them for 2 to 3 days, until you "extinguish" the use of stickers as social reinforcers take over. Friendship becomes its own reward.

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